Department of Transportation
Transportation Planning Grants
Grant Administration Trainings
Fiscal Year 2001-02

The Division of Transportation Planning conducted Grant Administration workshops throughout the state in April-June 2002. These workshops were held in anticipation of Fiscal Year (FY)01/02 grant award announcements and were organized to inform district grant managers of the steps needed to successfully administer FY01/02 grants (including how to encumber funds, complete contract documentation, etc.). This document is a summary of the questions asked during the workshops and the answers to those questions.

Grant Administration Frequently Asked Questions

Specific Application Questions/Comments:

1. Many of the questions in the FY01/02 and FY02/03 grant package were redundant.
    Response: The Division of Transportation Planning (DOTP) recognizes this problem and is attempting to create a streamlined FY03/04 grant package that deletes the redundancies and focuses on the most important aspects of the programs.

2. The inclusion and placement of supplemental questions was confusing to applicants.
    Response: Supplemental questions will not be a part of the FY03/04 package.

3. Don't request attachments with applications.
    Response: Upcoming grant application packages will not require applicants to submit a copy of their public participation guidelines, Disable Business Enterprise documentation, or other cumbersome documents. However, letters of support will still be required attachments.

Choosing the appropriate grant program:

4. A list of "criteria" was requested to help steer applicants to the correct grant program when more than one could be appropriate.
    Response: In the FY03/04 package there is a revised section for each grant program that describes the program's purpose, example project types, and grant specific objectives. This information should help applicants decide which program is most relevant for their project. Additionally, districts should assist potential applicants cater their proposal to fit the prescribed program objectives.

5. What happens if an applicant submits an application for the "wrong" grant program (ie. the application would be better suited in a difference program other than the one applied for)?
    Response: For the benefit of the applicant, the proposal may be referred to a different grant program if it is better suited for a different type of funding.

6. Put abstract/summary of approved applications on the web.
   Response: The Community Based Transportation Planning (CBTP) grant program put a summary of previously awarded grant projects on the web and plans to do this for all grant awards. Other programs are also encouraged to do so.

Specific Program Requirements:
7. Since the CBTP and Environmental Justice: Context Sensitive Solutions (EJ) programs are both state funded, the match requirements should be equivalent.
   Response: The grant programs have evaluated their match requirements and plan to keep them as is (CBTP match at 20% and EJ at 10%).

8. Do Overall Work Program (OWP) informational items need amendments if schedules or other information change?
   Response: Yes, the individual Work Element of the OWP should be amended if changes occur to the project such as the completion date of a study is extended. The OWP is the document used to track progress of transportation planning activities in the region.

9. Can a City or County adopt one local resolution for all the applicable awarded grants rather than individual resolutions?
   Response: If the County or City allows this, it can be done. As discussed, Caltrans encourages blanket local resolutions. Reminder: local resolutions will be required only if a grant is awarded.

Timeline:
10. Because grants to cities and counties require a local resolution as a part of the application package, the application due date should take into consideration their board meetings (typically at the end of January).
    Response: Every board meets at various times throughout the year and unfortunately we are unable appease all schedules.

11. The due dates for the FY01/02 and FY02/03 package were very difficult because of the short time frames and the holidays.
    Response: This is the current proposal for the FY03/04 grant package (we've tried to provide more time between due dates and minimize the interference of holidays):
    1. *Application package to be mailed: August 1st 2002*
    2. *Applications due to the districts: November 2nd 2002*
    3. *Applications due from districts to Headquarters: November 22nd 2002*
    4. *Selection committees: December 2002/January 2003*

Subcontracting:
12. To contract with a co-applicant, does the applicant need to sole source, competitive bid, or use another process?
    Response: If the co-applicant is a non-profit organization, and was noted as a co-applicant in the grant application, advertising requirements are not necessary.

13. If the grant is a continuation of an existing project, does the applicant need to competitively bid the work again?
   Response: No, the applicant is not required to rebid the project. However, before work begins on the grant portion of the project the applicant needs to write a letter to the Department stating that this is a continuing project and ask not to competitively bid that portion of the project.

   Information Sharing:
14. A few districts have expressed interest in conducting trainings for their customers to provide grant-writing guidance.
   Response: We encourage all districts to provide as much assistance to prospective grantees as possible, and workshops on grant writing are a great idea.

Grant Administration Training Dates:
District 1 – May 2, 2002*
District 2 – April 4, 2002
District 3 – March 22, 2002
District 4 – March 28, 2002
District 5 – April 2, 2002
District 6 – March 4, 2002
District 7 – June 18, 2002
District 8 – June 18, 2002
District 9 – May 2, 2002*
District 10 – March 18, 2002
District 11 – April 9, 2002
District 12 – June 18, 2002

*workshops conducted via video conference